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S P E E C H  
OF  
HON. WILLIAM ALLEN  
OF OHIO,  
ON  
THE STATE OF THE UNION,  
DELIVERED IN THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 7, 1861

The House having under consideration the report from the select committee of thirty-three—

Mr. ALLEN said:

Mr. SPEAKER: As the Representative of an intelligent and patriotic constituency, I desire to be heard upon the pending report, which relates to a matter of vital importance to the people of every section of this country—the preservation of the American Union. Our country has never before been, and I trust never will again be, so near the verge of hopeless ruin. I need scarcely refer to the many disasters which have befallen us; they are being realized to the remotest parts of the Confederacy by the people of every age, sex, and condition. Our national Treasury is bankrupt; our national credit depreciated; public and individual confidence removed; our merchants have failed; our banks suspended; our mechanics are out of employment; our agricultural interests are paralyzed; and thousands of our honest, toiling citizens suddenly rendered almost destitute. Financial distress and ruin stalk throughout our hitherto happy and prosperous land, while revolution has raised its hideous form, and is marching with gigantic strides to the destruction of the noblest fabric of government ever dedicated to the freedom of man. The foundations of this proud edifice, erected by the hands of the patriots of 1776, consecrated to the freedom and happiness of their descendants, and as an asylum for the oppressed of all lands, are being sapped, and the mighty structure is shaken from centre to circumference; and the patriotic millions, with hearts devoted to the institutions of the Government, and ever cherishing the memories of the fathers who framed it, with agonizing countenances and uplifted voices are crying, “God save the Union!”

In the midst of this perilous crisis, is it not our duty, as Representatives in whom have been confided important trusts by our countrymen, to pause and inquire the cause of all this distress and alarm, and, if possible, to propose a remedy before our nation's history is closed? Sir, we are recreant to every confidence reposed in us, if we remain with folded arms and calm indifference to these momentous events, and a fearful responsibility awaits us before the “bar of public opinion” and the “bar of God.” Perhaps the real cause of the misfortunes and perils by which we are surrounded is to be found in the spirit of discontent, avarice, and selfishness of certain reckless demagogues in both sections of the country, whose motto is “rule or ruin,” and who are ever ready to sacrifice the interests of their countrymen to advance their unrighteous schemes for wealth and power. But the means by which they have so far effected the object of their country's ruin is by the agitation of the subject of slavery. This has been for a number of years the all-absorbing question with politicians in all parts of the country, and about the only ground upon which

men sought or obtained political preferment. Nearly every great question of national policy which formerly occupied the attention of the people and their public servants has become obsolete, or regarded of little importance, compared with this one, which, practically, has served no useful purpose to any person but that of political capital to those who could obtain by it political power.

But politicians of each section have dwelt long and loud upon it; they have exhausted the vocabulary in coining popular phrases by which they might the more bitterly denounce those who antagonize with them. While the northern agitators have, in the most bitter and severe manner, denounced the slaveholders of the South, and those who refused to join in waging war against their institution, the southern agitators have been equally vigilant in their denunciations of the people of the North, whom they denounce as Abolitionists without distinction. Fanatical harangues and sentiments of impracticable men in either section, have been heralded forth by those of the other as reflecting public opinion in the entire North or entire South.

Southern agitators have warned their people to beware of northern aggression; and northern agitators have, in like manner, admonished theirs to guard vigilantly against southern aggression. And thus, these two classes of ultra and unreasonable men, without influence in the beginning, have, by incessant inflammatory appeals to the people, created that division and distrust which has brought about the deplorable state of affairs we now witness. The fanatics of the South have heretofore styled themselves Democrats; but they were Democrats for the purpose of destroying Democracy. The majority of the people of either section, as I believe, are naturally conservative. I know those of the North are; and southern politicians know this. But some of them have ever been ready to furnish northern agitators with materials by which they might overpower conservative northern men—those who have periled their political success, and, amid storms of fanaticism, advocated for southern people their rights, as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The mad harangues of southern agitators have been scattered over the entire North by northern interventionists, with the design of making the northern Democracy responsible for all the odious doctrines advocated at the South—such as the right of secession, the revival of the African slave trade, and other propositions which never were concurred in by the Democracy of the North, and by very few at the South. Again, the ultra portion of the Republican party at the North have, with their inflammatory appeals, not only perverted northern sentiment, but placed in the hands of southern interventionists weapons for an unjust warfare against conservative southern men. The two extreme classes of politics have gained the ascendancy in their respective sections, the northern predominating over the southern section; and, in the election of Abraham Lincoln President of the United States by the Republican party, aided by southern disunionists, who contributed to the result by dividing the Democratic party, this inflamed state of public feeling is about to culminate in the destruction of the Government. The irrepressible conflict is about to be realized, not as the natural result of the institution of slavery, as recognized by the Constitution, but the result of a perversion of public sentiment by mad partisans; not a conflict between freedom and African slavery, but a conflict between order and anarchy, between Government and revolution, which involves not the welfare of the four millions of slaves in this country, but the weal or woe of the millions of our own race, whose liberties are jeopardized thereby.

It is useless to pursue this subject. It is enough to know that this conflict exists, and that if it is not soon suppressed, it will consummate the nation's destruction. A number of the people of the southern States claim the right, for causes the sufficiency of which they declare their right to be the exclusive judges, of withdrawing from the Government, and severing their connection with it; and in pursuance of this claim, seven of the States, so far as they can by their own action, have placed themselves beyond the pale of the General Government. It is useless to consume time in controverting so preposterous a claim as that of the secessionists. No such right as secession exists—at least as a constitutional right. No such right is anywhere recognized by the provisions of the Constitution; but both the instrument itself and the history of its adoption, show that the Union was designed to be perpetual; and that no State could become a party to that instrument except under the bonds of a perpetual Union. The General Government, being the repository of certain powers delegated by the people of the several States for the common wel-

fare, has no right to permit the people of any State to absolve themselves from allegiance to it, without the consent of the people of the remaining States, or at least without the concurrence required for an amendment of the Constitution. The preamble to the Constitution of the United States recites the following language:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

If the people of any State have a right to withdraw from the Federal Union, and sever all connection with it, at such time and for such cause as they may deem proper and sufficient, our Government is the sheerest system of humbuggery; and the patriots who laid its foundations, as has been supposed, upon a firm and enduring basis, instead of being venerated and honored by the American people, as they have been for eighty years, are worthy the execrations of the millions of people upon whom they have entailed the direst calamities that ever befell mankind. The doctrine of the right of secession is absurd and ridiculous. The Union of the original States was formed by the people of each, in which they, in the language of the preamble just recited, "in order to form a more perfect Union, insure domestic tranquillity, and provide for the common defence," delegated to the General Government certain enumerated powers, which the Government has the right to exercise; and to that extent its power is sovereign and paramount. As to those powers which are not delegated, they remain with the people of the States, and to the extent of those powers the people therein are sovereign.

The Constitution is a compact binding upon the States of the Union who have become parties to it, and binding upon the people in their collective and individual capacity; and none can avoid its provisions without a violation of that compact. No more striking instance of the absurdity of this doctrine is to be found than that of the secession of the State of Florida. The people of Florida, like the other seceding States, have passed an ordinance of secession, by which they claim to resume the sovereignty which they have heretofore vested in the General Government. The territory which comprises the State of Florida was purchased by the United States at a cost of \$5,000,000. After the Government acquired the territory, it cost the sum of \$50,000,000 to quiet the Indians and protect its citizens. A large amount of money has been expended by the General Government in the erection of forts, public buildings, &c., for the common defence and common benefit. Previous to the acquisition of the territory its citizens were the subjects of one of the most despotic Governments of Europe—that of the Government of Spain—and were thus relieved from despotic power. Now, with a mere handful of inhabitants—less than the population of the district which I represent—after the Government has paid the price of their freedom, and expended millions of money for their benefit, this little band of disorganizers talk about resuming their sovereignty, and propose to walk out of the Union and take the public property with them. This is the position of Florida; and the same inconsistency presents itself, in part, as to Louisiana and Texas, the last two States which have seceded.

The Louisiana purchase, of which the State of Louisiana is a part, cost the Government the sum of \$15,000,000. The purchase was made mainly to acquire control of the Mississippi river, and to afford an outlet for the commerce of the great West. Louisiana has received her full share of the public expenditures: her great metropolis has been built up and enriched by our trade. She, although intimately connected with the North commercially, has attempted to sever her connection with us, and has placed herself in a hostile attitude to the Government. We are not only to lose the price paid for her territory, the money expended since, but the free navigation of the Mississippi river, the paramount object in making the purchase. It is true, she declares in her proceedings of secession that the navigation of the river is to be free to States maintaining friendly relations with her, but we will not be considered in that attitude unless we consent to her unreasonable demands.

In the acquisition of Texas we were involved in a bloody war with Mexico, which cost us millions of dollars and hundreds of lives; in addition to expenditures for public property within the State, large expenditures have been incurred in transporting and sustaining troops in part for the protection of her frontier. Only last session Congress was asked to provide for two mounted regiments for the protection of her frontier.

As a reward to the Government of the United States for extending its protection over them, those States propose appropriating the public property to their own use, and to use the forts and public arms in the destruction of the lives of our people, if they attempt to resist their unjust demands. The territory of the other seceding States was within the limits of the Confederacy as first established; but the fortifications, custom-houses, and other property which they have seized, were paid for out of the common treasure for the common benefit; the people of these States have an interest in them as citizens of the United States, but not simply as citizens of the seceding States. This property was not only purchased and paid for at an extravagant price in many instances, but the title of the ground upon which the public buildings are situate was, by the legal and rightful owners, vested in the United States, and no claim can be set up that it reverts to these States in any event. Not only has the Government jurisdiction over it, but it is the absolute property of the Government, and those States have no more right to it than the highwayman has to his booty. These facts render the whole doctrine of secession so preposterous that I am surprised it should find an advocate.

But it is said the right of revolution exists when the oppression of a Government becomes too intolerable to be borne. Of this there can be no doubt. In such case, revolution becomes justifiable; but is the revolution now going on of that character? What is the alleged cause? The triumph of a sectional party, and the election of a sectional candidate to the Presidency; by which it is claimed a war will be waged by the Federal Government against slavery until it is exterminated. Those fears, however honest and well founded, do not justify such an extraordinary resort as yet. Let the southern people wait for some overt act of aggression on the part of the new Administration before appealing to this remedy. The Republican party have accomplished their object; they have elected their President; they can now afford to be generous to their southern brethren. Their President will be anxious to be President of the whole country, and not a fragment of it, and to close his official career, as far as possible, with the respect of his countrymen everywhere. He has been elected according to the forms of the Constitution and laws of the United States, and should be installed as the Chief Magistrate. If he violates the Constitution, or deals unjustly with the people of any section, there is a remedy under the Constitution. In such case, if the remedy be not applied before, the people, at the expiration of his term, will hurl him from power.

The people of the South are unnecessarily alarmed. Their grievances are much magnified. It has been claimed that their cause for rebellion is equal to that of the heroes of the Revolution; but the analogy does not hold good. One of the chief causes of complaint on the part of the colonists was, that they were taxed without being allowed representation. But the seceding States, so far from being deprived of the right of representation—their representatives, at their instance, have withdrawn from this Hall, and refused to participate in the deliberations of this body. Yet their names are retained on the roll, and as often as it is called, they are called upon to cast their votes upon such measures as receive the consideration of the House. The colonists rebelled because of actual oppression; the cotton States because they fear oppression, as they allege, in the election of a sectional candidate to the Presidency. The colonists were resisting actual grievances; the secessionists are resisting imaginary or apprehended grievances. There is certainly no great similarity between their condition and that of their brave ancestors. The security and prosperity, in my opinion, of all the States are in the Union, and in the strict observance of the Constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof.

But the people, or at least those who assume to control public sentiment in the seceding States, declare differently, and act accordingly; and we are compelled to deal with what we believe to be their follies rather than the justice of their demands; and crimination and recrimination, at this point, can do no good. We are called upon to deal in stern realities. Seven States have seceded, and are in a state of revolution. Others threaten to follow; and unless some action is had, and that speedily, the latter States, from their position and relation with the institution of slavery, although disposed to be loyal to the Constitution, may be precipitated into the awful vortex of revolution. I have ever been hopeful that this secession movement would, by some means, be arrested before the border States, as they are called, should take their position with the cotton States; for, the Confederacy once dissevered, the South united in a southern confederacy, and I have no hope of

a reconstruction of the government. I look upon such a proposition as totally impracticable. The Confederacy once broken, it is broken forever. Therefore, I cannot consider propositions of any kind which look to a division of the Confederacy. We hear schemes for northern, southern, border, western, and Pacific confederacies. Such propositions are ill-timed. It will be time enough to consider these propositions when all hope of maintaining the present Confederacy shall have failed. Until that time, I will not so far relax my energies in support of this glorious Union as to look at it in a dismembered attitude.

The people of my district are firmly and immovably attached to the American Union. They behold in its maintenance, under the spirit of the Constitution, the great bulwark of their safety and happiness. They can never consent to its dissolution, but will cling to it through every storm of fanaticism and revolution that rages in the land, as the unfortunate mariner clings to the last wreck of the sinking vessel. They will make every concession that honor can grant or justice demand to give permanence to the Government and peace to the country. They will ever vindicate the nation's rights and defend its honor. They will never countenance an insult from a foreign foe or an unfaithful citizen, to that glorious flag which has waved in triumph over so many victories, protected our commerce upon every sea, and commanded for us the respect of the civilized world. They will ever denounce those who would trample upon the nation's ensign, or raise the arm of rebellion against one of the best systems of Government ever established among men. They are a law-abiding people, and will not countenance disobedience to the laws of the country by the people of any portion thereof.

This leads me to say something upon a subject which has been so much discussed here, about which there exists a diversity of opinion, and upon which, from the artful language sometimes employed by those who discuss it, there is much misapprehension—I mean the power and duty of the Government to enforce such laws as may be indispensable to its existence. None but those who believe in the right of secession will deny the right of the Government to enforce such laws. But the policy of doing so is questioned by many who deny the constitutional right of secession, on various grounds. One is, that it is an attempt to coerce the seceding States; and that this cannot be done without involving the country in a civil war; and that States thus coerced would be but conquered provinces, and not willing and loyal subjects. The venerable President, in his annual message, tells us that we cannot coerce a seceding State, for to do so would be to wage a war against a State by the General Government, which the Government has no right to do. I do not claim that the Government has any power to levy war against a State; nor can a State, as such, violate the Federal laws, and be guilty of treason to the Government; but her citizens may. A State, as such, is presumed to be loyal to the Constitution and laws of the United States; and when, by her Legislature, or convention called in pursuance thereof, she nullifies Federal legislation, such action of the State Legislature is simply void; but her citizens, who thus attempt to pervert the powers of her Legislature, and under color of State legislation trample upon Federal laws, are responsible, and are amenable to punishment, whether those citizens be few or many.

But the judicial officers of the General Government having resigned in some of the seceding States, many of the laws, at least without further legislation by Congress, cannot be enforced; and some of them, indeed, cannot be enforced at all; but these latter are such as more particularly concern the people of the seceding States as to rights and remedies existing between them; if they choose to deprive themselves of the benefits of the laws, the misfortune is their own; it is their privilege to do so, if the rights of the citizens of other portions of the country are not impaired thereby. But the forts and public property may be protected, and the public revenue collected—at least by proper legislation—without the aid of the Federal courts; and while this can be done, I am for it; and not until it is demonstrated that the Government has not the strength to defend its property, and collect its revenue, can the Executive, under an oath to support the Constitution, surrender either to the secessionists. While the Government can perform these functions, it is a Government. When it fails to do so, it is at an end. The Executive cannot lightly throw off the obligations the Constitution imposes. As Representatives, we cannot do so. And the northern people, and many of the South, will not consent to a quiet surrender of the public property to those who are attempting

the overthrow of the Government. Their brave hearts and strong arms will ever be arrayed against a movement of this kind. A people who would willingly witness the last prop of their Government removed, without an effort to prevent it, would be incapable and unworthy of self-government anywhere. I do not care how small you reduce the area of a Government, there will always be rebellious subjects, who would overthrow it, if they could quiet loyal citizens by threatening civil war if they were not allowed to consummate their designs.

The idea of peaceable secession, however desirable, when secession becomes inevitable, is, in my opinion, utterly impossible. Does any one suppose that, if the sections cannot now agree upon a settlement touching the question of slavery in the Territories, they will amicably adjust the important differences which must arise upon a separation? Will not the demands on the one side, and the determination to resist them on the other, be rather increased than diminished, when once all hope of conciliation has failed? To my mind, most certainly such will be the case. All fraternal feeling will then be dissipated; all regard for constitutional obligations will then have ceased; respect by one section for the rights, feelings, and interests of the people of the other, will no longer exist. But in the maddened frenzy, fraternal hatred, unrestrained ambition and avarice which will have control of the public mind, in that dark day of anarchy, which I shudder to contemplate, all sections, in a mad strife to obtain as much as possible of the cargo of the deserted and sinking ship, will ultimately seek, in an appeal to arms, the final arbitrament of their differences, and a means of revenge for their real or supposed grievances. Let separation for the time be peaceable, with two independent Governments carved out of the same common territory, the subjects of each fresh from scenes of strife, their bosoms rankling with hatred and jealousy toward each other—as would be the people of the northern and southern confederacies in the event of their construction—and how long would the Governments cherish friendly relations toward each other?

Sir, when we talk about a peaceable separation of the two sections of the Confederacy, an amicable division of public property, and an amicable adjustment of the relations that are to exist between the two confederacies as two distinct nations, we deceive ourselves and attempt to misguide others. We should not suffer ourselves to be deluded with the belief that this mighty Republic—the boon of our fathers, cemented with their blood, and consecrated by their memory, with its internal relations with its States and the people of each; with all its vast relations and intercourse with nations abroad, with thirty-four sovereign States revolving around its constitutional centre, and bound by the affections of thirty million people, taught from their infancy to regard it as the palladium of their liberty and safety, and who cherish with fond and proud recollection the valor and patriotism of their brave ancestors who established it—can dissolve and pass away without a struggle. No, sir; while patriotism can predominate over passion and prejudice, it will stand a proud monument of the wisdom of its founders; and when it falls, if fall it must, it will go down beneath a sea of blood. I do not desire to indulge in too great a stretch of imagination on the terrific scenes which I believe must surround the Republic as it departs from its place among the nations of the earth; but the history of other nations, as well as the nature of our Government and character of our people, corroborate my views, whether in this instance I am correct or not.

Is it not of the utmost importance that every effort be made to avert the calamities of a dissolution, in whatever form, and by peaceable measures preserve, if possible, the rich inheritance? Will we not be held responsible by the people we represent, and by generations to come, if we fail to use every effort within our power to avert these evils? It will not be a sufficient excuse for us that we could not compromise the difficulties by which we are surrounded without a sacrifice of some favorite dogma, by which we have been promoted to the places we occupy. The various abstractions upon the subject of slavery will be found of no consequence when compared with the weal or woe of the thirty million people we represent.

We should rise above all party prejudice and party considerations. If we cannot do this, we are unfit to occupy the places we now hold. But if we ever compromise, it must be by mutual concessions. It will not do for one section to demand a compromise upon certain terms, and reject all others. Each Representative here must be expected to act as he can answer to his constituents and to his conscience.



But in doing this, liberal concessions can be made by all parties, without giving offence to the former or doing violence to the latter.

My proposition for a settlement would be, to let the people, both in our present and future acquired territory, settle the question of slavery for themselves, in such a manner as to place it beyond the control or responsibility of the Government. But, in supporting such a proposition, I would make no sacrifice, but would simply be carrying out my views of the true policy upon this question. I must, therefore, be ready to accept other propositions for a settlement of our difficulties. And I will ever be found ready to make all honorable concessions, when, by doing so, I can aid in restoring fraternal relations between the sections, and settling the question which has given rise to our unhappy difficulties. I shall vote for the proposition reported by the chairman of the committee of thirty-three, Mr. Corwin; and would willingly support other propositions which have been offered here for the purpose of terminating our troubles. The most important of the propositions reported by the chairman of this committee is that which proposes the admission of the territory south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  at once as a State, with such constitution as the majority of the people may determine. This should at once settle all disputes as to our present territorial possessions.

If, after making all honorable concessions, and using all the means within our power to prevent the fearful spread of revolution, our offers for peace are rejected and our appeals unheard, by those who are madly rushing forward and dragging their countrymen after them into the awful abyss of anarchy and civil war, the responsibility will not rest upon us; our ruined countrymen cannot reproach us with being the authors of their misfortunes, however great. Surely no one who has a spark of humanity, to say nothing of patriotism, desires to see the country plunged into a civil war. The majority of the people in the North, I am satisfied, are opposed to war, if it can be avoided; but there must be a limit to the demands of the secessionists. If they carry their movements too far, they may exasperate the most moderate of the northern people. The seizure of the forts, arsenals, navy-yards, custom-houses, and vessels of the Government by the people of the seceding States, firing upon its vessels, striking down its flag, and the many other acts recently committed under the alleged right of secession, if persisted in, will eventually arouse among the Union-loving people of the country a spirit of retaliation as terrible as they have been forbearing, and which will be deaf to all existing complaints. The acts of the seceding States are not justified by any existing provocation.

The question for the Government to decide will then be not whether it will coerce, but whether it will be coerced into submission. I make these suggestions with the kindest feeling toward my countrymen in all sections; but these are stubborn facts which I cannot overlook. The State which I, in part, represent, contains among its population many who owe their nativity to southern soil, and who are bound to the southern people by ties of consanguinity, as well as of nationality. Situated on the border, separated from the slaveholding States of Kentucky and Virginia only by the Ohio river, our relations with the southern people are intimate, and our interests, in many respects, identical. We have a common interest in the navigation of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and a common interest in maintaining those relations which secure us equal and uninterrupted rights in those great channels of commerce. The southern States want our trade; and we want theirs, except their negroes. Why should our relations of peace and amity and kindness be destroyed in an angry strife equally hazardous to both sections?

Within the confines of the district which I have the honor to represent is the "bloody ground" upon which occurred the frightful massacre of our countrymen, memorable in the country's history, and known as St. Clair's defeat; where the gallant Wayne afterwards established a fort which he called Recovery, and where a flourishing village now stands, bearing the latter name. There lie mouldering in the dust the bones of six hundred valiant patriots who fell beneath the cruel warfare of the savages of the forest, who, in overpowering numbers, arrested the progress of the American Army when marching forth in defence of the early pioneers of the northwestern territory. The brave sons of Kentucky and Virginia were then willing to peril their lives in the protection of our citizens, and in opening that vast territory to the peaceful pursuits of civilized life. Our people are capable of appreciating the magnanimity of those gallant sons of the South who periled and

sacrificed their lives for the protection of our infant settlements. It would indeed be base ingratitude in us, now that we have grown prosperous and powerful, if we were found willing, upon the first and slightest pretext, to fly to arms, and engage in a bloody conflict with the descendants of our kind benefactors.

The recollection by our people of the disinterested and self-sacrificing patriotism of those heroes of the southern States who poured their blood upon our soil, and left their bones as mementoes of their valor, if we were governed by no higher obligations, would be sufficient to restrain us from seeking a collision with our southern brethren; and the recollection of their brave sires who sleep upon our soil should restrain the people of the South from doing any act which might precipitate the States in a fraternal war, and again drench our land with blood. Let the memory of their brave ancestors, and their chivalric deeds, restrain them from willingly surrendering the graves of their countrymen to the jurisdiction of a foreign Government. Every feeling of our nature and every impulse of humanity shrinks from a contemplation of such a war as that which must arise between the sections of this Confederacy, if moderation and forbearance do not characterize the counsels and proceedings of the people of all sections. Imagination cannot depict the sorrows and calamities which must not only befall our people, in such an event but also the oppressed subjects of foreign Powers who are looking to our Government as a beacon-light, by which they hope to be guided into a safe deliverance from the tyranny of their despotic rulers.

I rejoice to learn that Virginia, the "proud Old Dominion," the mother of Presidents and of States, the mother of the great Northwest, from whence I hail, has, by the voice, as recently expressed, of her patriotic and chivalric sons, declared her disposition to forbear for a time, to give time for deliberation and reflection, with the hope of a reconciliation—with the earnest desire that some measure may be devised and consummated that will satisfy the conservative people of all sections. I trust that a like spirit will prevail among the people of the other border States. I know the people of these States have some cause of complaint against the North. The Constitution has sometimes been disregarded, and the laws violated to their injury. I regret it. I believe the majority of the people of the North are opposed to these violations of the national compact. Although, in the bitterness of party feeling, they may have supported men and measures giving countenance to them, yet, after seeing and feeling the results of this unwarranted interference with the affairs of the people of the South, I believe they will not only oppose, but use every effort to suppress, violations of law, which may impair the rights of the people of the South and disturb fraternal relations between us. Let the people of all our sister States who are now considering the propriety of disunion pause before they reach the brink of revolution, and ponder well the perils into which they precipitate themselves and their countrymen, by falling into line with the now retreating column.

Under a vague expectation of providing for their better security and future protection, may they not sacrifice peace, and liberty itself, to the wild ambition of designing demagogues?

In conclusion, let me entreat my compeers here, and my countrymen everywhere, to unite at once, to unite speedily, upon some measure which will quiet the storm which rages around us, and dispel the dark cloud of disunion which lowers over our heads, that we may again bask in the sunshine of national prosperity and happiness, and transmit unsullied to future generations the precious charge committed to our care, of our national independence and national honor.



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